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ABSTRACT

This planning paper for the Bay Area Early Intervention Program outlines the role that the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development will play in a collaborative effort with community organizations that is intended to develop comprehensive, long-term, community-based services for low-income families. Services will start before or during pregnancy and continue into the school years. Assumptions that guide the work of the collaborative group are presented. Activities that the Far West Laboratory will undertake are listed. A long-range plan is described. (PCB)

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THE BAY AREA EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

December, 1988

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Bay Area Early Intervention Program Planning Paper

The Bay Area Early Intervention Program is a collaborative activity which joins together the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, the Urban Strategies Council of Oakland Calfornia, the Parent Infant Neighborhood Center of San Francisco, and the Marin City Community Development Corporation. This collaboration was initiated for the purpose of developing comprehensive, long term, community based services to low income families starting at or before pregnancy and continuing into the schools.

Six fundamental assumptions drive the work of the group:

General Assumptions

1) an early intervention program should be designed not as an innoculation but as a first step in a continuing and comprehensive system of supports.

2) early intervention efforts should take place with and through already existing agencies in the community served rather than stand alone, and in addition to individuals and families, service systems should be the focus of the intervention.

3) partnerships with the schools that will eventually serve program children should be established well before children reach the school door.

Assumptions Related to Early Intervention Philosophy

4) for educational and social benefits to be maximized, intervention should be started early, with particular attention paid to the development of the fetus in a drug free and healthy womb.

5) for early intervention to be effective, a personal relationship needs to be established between a member(s) of the early

enrichment team and the families served, particularly the principal caregivers of the program children.

6) a non-judgemental analysis of family strengths coupled with practical attention to family need i.e., nutrition, child care, housing, finances, etc. should be the basis for the individualization of intervention strategies for families.

Far West Laboratory's Role in the Collaboration

Far West Laboratory, through its Center for Child and Family Studies, will facilitate the efforts of the community organizations named above to develop, provide, and evaluate new systems and services for low income families. It is anticipated that each of the three community organizations will develop and shape unique components of the early intervention approach, but will agree on common themes that will be coordinated and facilitated jointly and with the assistance of FWL.

Far West Laboratory will commit a portion of its Western Region Service Center resources for a period of at least 2 years for this purpose.

The activities we are prepared to engage in are:

- design of early intervention initiatives/proposal development
- design of specific intervention activities
- training and technical assistance for the conduct of activities
- research and evaluation of the intervention effort
- local, regional and national networking
- community organization
- development and dissemination of policy and program recommendations

In addition it will be FWL's role to make sure that the latest information on effective early intervention be brought to the attention of the

agencies serving the three collaborating communities and share with others in the field of early intervention the ongoing efforts of the "Bay Area Early Intervention Program." For example, it is anticipated that a research link will be established with the nationally recognized Beethoven Project. It is also anticipated that 1990 data from the 20-year follow-up of the "Family Development Research Program" will be used for comparative purposes.

First Steps 1989

1) FWL will document the already existing early intervention services and systems in the three target communities.

2) FWL will coordinate the collection of information on services and treatment for drug addicted expectant mothers.

3) FWL will coordinate the development of the BAY AREA EARLY INTERVENTION PLAN.

4) FWL will develop and assist in the development of proposals to fund this plan.

5) FWL will provide training in early childhood intervention to agencies and groups specified by the consortium members.

6) FWL will publicize the intervention initiative within the region, with funding agencies, within the early childhood intervention community and with state and local government officials.

7) FWL will develop a network of "concerned educators" within the region who will be kept informed of the programs progress and enlisted as advisors.

Long-Range Plan

The Bay Area Early Intervention Program Consortium will develop a model program for the delivery of comprehensive services to low-income families. It will devise systems and strategies for analyzing and

supplementing the services of agencies and institutions already serving that population. This agency intervention process will take place starting at the prenatal period and move through infancy, preschool and into the early school years. Activities will take place at every point in a child's journey from infancy to third grade, with particular attention paid to the developmental transitions that take place as the child moves through life. The anticipated intervention strategy will directly focus on a selected number of program families and their contrasts in each of the three communities in the consortium, and those agencies and institutions that will serve them. Work with agencies and institutions will commence before program families arrive at their doorstep. Intervention efforts will prepare those agencies and institutions for service to the program families. Training, technical assistance, and organizational development help will be provided. The goal of this approach is to strengthen and supplement those services before and during the time program families receive service, and to alter the agencies' service approach from that point forward toward similar families who seek service.

Emphasis will be placed on the documentation of the efforts of the consortium to transform and orchestrate these services so that the program can be duplicated at other sites. Documentation and evaluation of these efforts are seen as an integral part of the intervention. Another important component of the program's work will be the development of a networking system with interested members of the health, education, and social service community. This will be done locally, within the Western Region and nationally. This will ensure input from and dissemination to others interested in service to low-income populations. It is expected that the networking activity will eventually result in training, technical assistance, design, and development work with organizations and agencies outside of the Bay Area.